



DIGITAL GOVERNMENT NEWS
SPRING 2000



Going first

Early adopters of digital tools
put Washington out front

BUILDING DIGITAL GOVERNMENT

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*Washington, winner of the
1997 and 1998 Digital State Award
Progress and Freedom Foundation*

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the state web site at: <http://access.wa.gov>*

*Keep up with technology at TechCentral,
the DIS website at: <http://www.wa.gov/dis>*

*Digital Government News chronicles the evolution of digital
government in Washington state. It has replaced Matrix as the
Washington State Department of Information Services' periodical
for its customers and other communities of interest.*

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Government is going digital. It is inevitable.

We can hasten the inevitable by making smart choices now. Like the birth of television or radio before it, digital government is being shaped by its pioneers. Some nervous tension is understandable at moments like these—but stage fright won't do. *The rehearsals are done, the stage is set, and the lights have been cued.*

It's showtime, folks

As part of his administration's response to the passage of Initiative 695, Gov. Gary Locke has directed agencies to streamline their internal business processes and "expand online government services to provide easier access for the public."

"Digital government" is the term used to describe this new way of doing the state's business, but the phrase often raises more questions than it answers. What does digital government really mean? How does it work? When will it be a reality? Digital government can be defined as a set of web-based applications and e-commerce tools, combined with the policies for building, managing and launching them in a well-coordinated way. But digital government is more than the sum of its operational parts. It is a means to a more perfect end—transforming Washington state into the most citizen-centric government in the nation.

From online banking to book shopping, customers have come to expect—even demand—one-stop online services. A coordinated approach to digital government will allow Washington state to provide this kind of service in the public sector. And with more government-to-government processes performed online, Washington state will deliver another significant customer benefit: reduction in the cost of doing business.

The Digital Government Plan

In November 1999 the DIS Customer Advisory Board was asked to review a draft of the Washington State Digital Government Plan, prepared at the direction of the Information Services Board. The plan contains timelines for coordinating and launching several agencies' high-priority digital government projects by June 2000. It also describes a "build it once" approach for project managers to apply existing architecture, components and early lessons learned to new projects.

The cornerstone of the plan is agency collaboration in three key areas: Internet applications, infrastructure, and policy. Uncoordinated agency development will result in

multiple Internet log-ins, passwords and plug-ins for citizen and business users, as well as security risks for financial transactions. It will also mean higher development costs for the agencies themselves.

Seamless, online government

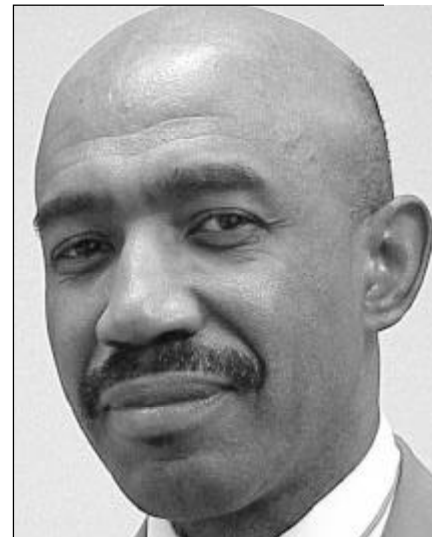
An enterprise view matters in digital government. The state is working to prevent the development of "stovepipe" or independent applications that will duplicate effort and undermine the potential for a seamless online government that is straightforward, secure and easy for citizens to use.

To achieve this, the plan calls for Internet applications, infrastructure and policy to intercept and interlock by June 2000, creating the foundation for current and future digital government projects.

The initial, high-profile digital government applications include Internet-based license tab renewals and master business license applications at Licensing, procurement at General Administration, and joint tax filing among those agencies with taxing authority. The Information Services Board has formally initiated and approved the DOL and GA projects.

At the same time, infrastructure project teams are working aggressively toward establishing a state certification authority, Internet security architecture and electronic payment infrastructure. There is considerable movement on the policy front too, with the adoption of a technology investment policy to address digital government and Internet standards and guide agencies as they build these next-generation applications.

Everyone in public-sector technology has a role in the plan, especially in the enterprise approach to digital government. We must engage the organizations through which we can contribute meaningfully to the digital government process—the Customer Advisory Board and the Technology Architecture Advisory Group. We must also work within our respective agencies to create an environment in which digital government can thrive.



THOMAS BYNUM
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
TECHNOLOGY SERVICES DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF
EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

CHAIR
DIS CUSTOMER ADVISORY BOARD

A black and white photograph of a man in a trench coat talking on a mobile phone, standing in front of classical stone columns. The man is wearing a light-colored trench coat over a dark vest and a striped shirt. He is holding a mobile phone to his ear with his right hand. The background features large, classical stone columns and a balustrade. The text "To realize the vision of digital government," is overlaid in red on the lower half of the image.

To realize the vision of digital government,

In the last five years, a number of Washington state government agencies became “first movers” on several fronts of the information technology revolution, despite the risks. By adopting digital tools early, they helped build the foundation for the state’s evolving digital government, and showed how delivering services and information electronically improves and strengthens relationships between citizens and their government.

For example, citizens may handle over the Internet many tasks that often required direct physical access to state offices, the Legislature, and county courthouses only a few years ago. Anyone may download and print a voter registration form. Public employees may check the status of their

agencies must work cooperatively to craft a single solution to a common business challenge. Yet they also must be willing to work independently, stepping forward to develop and test concepts on behalf of all.

retirement benefits, and businesses may file tax returns. Companies wanting to do business with the state may transmit bids instantly and securely.

Beyond the obvious time and money savings, digital government helps agencies respond to citizens’ needs and priorities, which in turn can increase public confidence in government. The aggressive groundwork of those willing to take a chance on early projects have made it all possible—today.

'We have to let technology do the routine aspects of the work we do.'



RALPH MUNRO
SECRETARY OF STATE

Signing on the digital line

Secretary of State Ralph Munro, whose stonemason grandfather helped build the Capitol in Olympia, laid one of the cornerstones of Washington's digital government. In early 1996 he requested the legislation that introduced the concept of digital signatures into Washington state law.

It was the second such law in the nation, but the first allowing private businesses to serve as trusted third parties in legally binding electronic transactions.

Looking back, he explained, there was no way of knowing in 1996 how accepted and pervasive web-based transactions would become by 2000. Then and now, Munro believed the law complemented the course Washington was following.

Saving time and travel

Digital tools allow citizens to get out of lines at physical government offices. People can download voter registration forms from the Internet, rather than visiting their local county auditor's office. Time and travel associated with business research is also drastically reduced. "It used to be that if an attorney wanted to see the file on a specific corporation, they had to pay a visit to Olympia. Now those files are available anytime online," Munro said.

As the state's chief election officer, Munro often fields questions about the prospect of conducting elections over the Internet. "We would do it tomorrow if we could build in the safety factors. Digital signature solves part of that. But it's one thing to order a shirt online, and another thing to have a million people going to the polls in Internet time."

However, those hurdles can be overcome—and much sooner than the average person thinks, he said. "We're working on it."

Preparing for bigger workloads

The Department of Retirement Systems administers seven public employee retirement systems that already serve

450,000 members. John Charles, DRS director, said projections of an imminent retirement surge spurred the agency to become an early adopter of digital technologies to avoid sacrificing customer service.

DRS' initial foray into digital government was a 1998 pilot project with the Department of Information Services. It proved that the agency's state and local government customers could use the Internet to download, complete, digitally sign and transmit a secure electronic form for reporting employees' retirement-related data.

The test marked state government's first use of digital signatures to make a secure form available over the Internet, and its first use of an Internet transaction to update data in a mainframe production system.

Benefiting agencies statewide

DRS has built on the success of that groundbreaking pilot through a recent project with Western Washington University. The Bellingham-based school can now send its employees' retirement data to Olympia securely over the Internet. "More than 700 local government employers submit data to Retirement Systems," said Charles. "There is massive potential for improving the speed and accuracy of their reporting by taking it online."

The agency recently launched an online retirement benefits estimator for members of Public Employees' Retirement System Plan 2 and Teachers' Retirement System Plan 2. Members enter their personal information, such as years of service, and the estimating service automatically calculates estimates of their retirement benefits.

Better access also is the goal of Retirement Systems' imaging project. It will transform the agency's inventory of more than 850 million paper documents—the third-largest paper file system on the West Coast—into electronic documents. This will eliminate time-consuming manual searches for a member's paper files and replace it with instant online access, "so we can fully serve customers on the first phone call," said Charles.

'We are guided by these questions: What improvements in service are important to our customers? How can we provide faster, cheaper, better service?'

What it comes down to is time and labor, he explained. "We have to let technology do the routine aspects of the work we do."

Filing business taxes electronically

The state Department of Revenue started 2000 by rolling out a faster and more versatile version of the electronic tax filing service it piloted in 1997 and put into production in 1998.

ELF, as the system is known, automatically computes taxes and enables businesses to file and pay their returns electronically—all in a secure, encrypted environment. It is the first such program delivered by a state over the Internet and is used by 6,000 Washington businesses already.

The free service reduces the agency's manual correction burdens by catching errors or omissions before a return is filed. It lets users customize their returns and provides instant online access to the latest tax information. It also allows businesses to file early but postpone payment until the due date, and generates an electronic confirmation that returns were received.

DOR director Fred Kiga expects the service, available to most quarterly and monthly taxpayers, will be available to additional categories of business taxpayers this year.

Reducing a deluge of paperwork

Like DRS, the state revenue department saw digital technologies not only as a tool for providing better customer service, but also for managing a rapidly increasing workload. ELF reduces the growing number of paper tax returns filed by Washington businesses, which join the state's tax rolls at an average rate of 25,000 new businesses each year.

The ELF concept also has moved beyond DOR to the Department of Labor and Industries. It has a pilot project under way to let employers report and pay industrial insurance premiums using the Internet and an electronic payment method.

In April the 20 employers initially taking part in the L&I pilot, also called ELF, will file their reports online for the first quarter of this year. The pilot will expand to include 160 employers by the end of the 2001 fiscal year.

Lowering the cost of services

Marsha Tadano Long, director of the Department of General Administration, knows her agency's customers prefer to focus their resources and attention on delivering services to citizens. With that in mind, they expect cost-effective services from GA.

"We know that one dollar saved in paying for GA services is one dollar that can be used for education, protection of the public or safe highways," Long said.

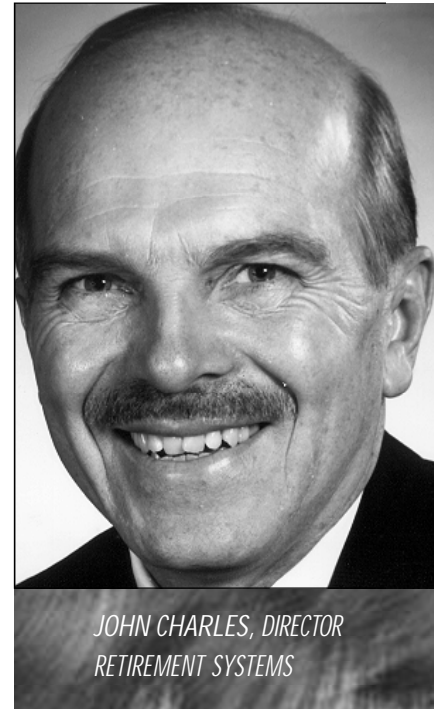
In June 1998 the agency partnered with DIS to make Washington the first state to receive legally binding bids over the Internet. A King County recycling firm responded to a call for bids by e-mailing a bid with a legally authorized digital signature.

"The digital bid is likely to stimulate more competition as we make it easier for companies to submit a proposal to the state. More competition, we hope, will lead to better prices for state agencies and the political subdivisions that use our contracts."

Purchasing system in the works

GA has started evaluating proposals for its next big digital endeavor, Long said: a new Internet-based purchasing system through which agencies can shop, order, receive and pay for goods and services online.

Her agency's experience as a first mover shows in its approach to adding more tools. "We are guided by these questions: What improvements in service are important to our customers? How can we provide faster, cheaper, better service? A lot of quick fixes may be offered, but a bit of caution is necessary to get the technological tool that fits a specific need or project."



JOHN CHARLES, DIRECTOR
RETIREMENT SYSTEMS

‘For years, many parts of state government have offered 7-by-24 service to citizens. The rest of us now need to start thinking that way.’



MARSHA TADANO LONG
DIRECTOR
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

At the same time, Long said, “We have experienced so much success with these early efforts that the risks, in hindsight, actually seem low. We’re encouraged by each success to do more.”

Planning Washington’s digital government

As the state’s information technology agency, DIS has been a partner to the agencies that have accepted the risks and helped make Washington the two-time Digital State title holder. It contributed to Washington’s national reputation by spearheading the development of Access Washington, and recently launched Inside Washington, the new state government intranet.

February brought the publication of the Washington State Digital Government Plan. Developed at the state Information Service Board’s direction, the plan casts a vision for digital government that centers on the citizen and around the Internet.

To help agencies accelerate and synchronize the deployment of their digital government services, DIS recently chartered the Digital Government Applications Academy: a place set apart for agencies to build digital government by doing, learning and collaborating.

“Digital government will be realized through collaboration among government entities, industry experts and customers to accelerate learning and share best practices for developing Internet business solutions,” said Steve Kolodney, DIS director. “The Academy provides a structured and safe place to transform public services to take full advantage of the Internet—to create new value, include new partners, and dramatically shorten business flows.”

Setting the standards

The challenges of creating Washington’s digital government are not limited to technology, agrees Maureen Morris, chair of the Electronic Commerce Executive Steering Committee. “We have a large number of groups dealing with policy issues from data architecture to security. The committee is gradually building a sense of how all these pieces fit together.”

Morris, deputy director of the Office of Financial Management, said the committee also is focused on shaping the delivery of government services to meet the needs of customer groups. “For years, many parts of state government have offered 7-by-24 service to citizens. The rest of us now need to start thinking that way.”

Building it once

DIS also continues to evaluate suppliers of digital government components. These include the digital certificates for legally binding electronic transactions, and services that will allow government to handle credit card payments.

After figuring out how to make these components work in a public-sector setting, DIS will make the results available for use throughout state government. It reinforces the “build it once” approach to creating a digital government.

As the Digital Government Plan notes, the challenge of putting government services online is significant. However, that challenge brings with it the opportunity to meet the public’s expectation of cheaper, faster, better government services through the use of digital technologies.

The promise of a fully functional digital government is that any citizen will be able to complete online what would have taken days to accomplish standing “in line.” The early adopters and risk takers have brought fulfillment of this promise closer than ever.

Champion racing driver Mario Andretti's observation about victory on the racecourse could just as easily apply to success on the Internet. He said, 'If you think you're in control, you're not going fast enough.'

Welcome to Internet time

The Internet is an ideal medium for offering government services. Busy people who can get information and conduct business at the click of a mouse expect nothing less from their governments. Citizens are taking charge. They want control of their relationships with government. How will the state respond?

Our founding fathers designed government to be deliberative. Debate, testimony and stakeholder participation, the means by which ideas are refined and improved until they command majority agreement, take time. But, what happens when the deliberate pace of government collides with a world running on Internet time?

Will state agencies disrupt their old models of service delivery with new Internet applications that compete against tried-and-true methods? Traditionalists argue that state government cannot choose its customers, but must provide service to all citizens whether or not they have access to current technology. Furthermore, public agencies avoid risk by improving systems at the margin instead of launching new applications in unfamiliar environments.

I believe that taxpayers expect government to improve service and reduce cost. They see changes in their business, community and family life and ask why government hasn't changed too. They know the Internet offers new ways to access information and services, at a fraction of the cost of older systems. They will demand that governments serve them electronically—on their terms.

Since government has no choice but to deliver services over the Internet, we should take a lesson from successful ".com" enterprises. Like the private sector, we must launch applications that compete with traditional methods of service delivery and be prepared to rebalance resources as citizens select the Internet as their preferred way to interact with government. One way to do this is to break free our Internet application teams so they can collaborate, learn and launch new applications that compete with older systems. We must develop separate Internet strategies that take aim at current processes.

Washington is transforming the relationship between citizens and state government with a new model—we call it "digital government."



STEVE E. KOLODNEY
DIRECTOR
INFORMATION SERVICES

'A lot is at stake. The relevance of government to everyday life just might hang in the balance.'

Governor calls for faster development of rural telecommunications

Gov. Gary Locke has proposed a legislative package that would speed up the placement of advanced telecommunications services in rural areas. His plan would streamline regulation, promote infrastructure investment and encourage competition.

The governor also announced a telecommunications pilot project in which the state will seek out telecommunications-dependent businesses looking to expand offices and facilities, and match them with rural communities.

Locke said his initiative would help reduce the disparity in telecommunications services between urban and rural areas of the state.

"When I became governor, I made it a priority to promote 'One Washington,' where we are not divided between urban and rural, east and west, or rich and poor," he said. "Yet in many communities, advanced telecommunications services are coming far too slowly, and in some parts of our state they are not available at all. We need to speed telecommunications investment in this state so that all citizens have access to the services they need to prosper in an information-age economy."

Locke said a modern and efficient telecommunications system provides educational opportunities, improves vital government services, and increases a community's ability to attract businesses and create jobs.

State Patrol streamlines access to criminal data

The Washington State Patrol has successfully rewritten its Washington State Identification System and Washington Crime Information Center applications into a combined system known as W2.

The W2 system captures data about criminal arrests and the final disposition of cases as well as information about missing persons and stolen property. *Completed ahead of schedule and under budget, the new system better automates data collection and is easier to maintain and use.*

State Patrol Chief Annette Sandberg said she is very pleased with the success of the project and looks forward to further enhancements to JIN in partnership with local criminal justice communities.

Completion of the W2 system means the DIS Justice Information Committee can check off another of the 10 goals it set last year in its 1999-2001 Biennial Integration Blueprint. The blueprint contains the strategy for completing a fully integrated justice network that will improve the accuracy, completeness and timeliness of criminal justice information within Washington.

Is your computer working overtime?

True or false: leaving computers and monitors on is better for the equipment and doesn't use much electricity. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, the correct answer is false, because new equipment is designed to withstand being turned on and off repeatedly.

According to a Department of General Administration resource efficiency team, a computer left on overnight and weekends generates \$25 per year in additional energy expenses. Last August GA conducted an evening survey of 12 campus buildings and found 1,126 computers left on. *Energy specialists concluded that if computer users in those buildings would turn off their monitors and computers at the end of the workday, the state could save \$28,150 in electricity expenses every year.*

The study, which also includes energy use comparisons of different CPUs and monitors, is one of many ongoing GA initiatives designed to save state resources - both natural and financial.

GA approached DIS' Customer Advisory Board about endorsing its recommendation to turn off computers and monitors after normal work hours and on weekends. The CAB agreed that this would conserve energy, provide some protection against after-hours power fluctuations, and prevent security risks created when users leave computers unattended while logged on to networks.

Because of the 24-by-7 work required by technology divisions in many agencies—including DIS' own data center and telecommunications operations—the CAB acknowledged that each agency should adopt its own policy based on operational needs and requirements.

State launches Inside Washington a new multifunctional intranet portal

The Department of Information Services in January launched Inside Washington in partnership with the departments of Personnel, Retirement Systems, General Administration, the Office of Financial Management and the Health Care Authority.

This new intranet portal uses web-based technologies to streamline business for Washington state government agencies. Ultimately, the portal will also connect local governments. State employees can use Inside Washington to access information about employee benefits, services and much more.

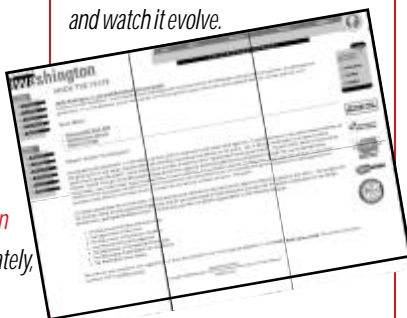
Following on the success of Access Washington, the state's award winning Internet web portal, Inside Washington is another significant step toward Gov. Gary Locke's goal of building a digital government.

Inside Washington provides employees access to resources such as:

- Commonly used electronic forms
- Online training
- Technology news
- Human resource information
- Procurement sources
- Policy information
- Financial reports and services
- Commonly used maps, directories and listings
- Agency to agency functions
- Centralized services and functions.

Relevant and timely news of interest to state employees is also updated regularly on the Inside Washington home page.

Inside Washington will be built in stages with continual input and contributions from state agencies. State employees may visit the web site at <http://inside.wa.gov> and watch it evolve.



State enters 2000 without a hitch

More than five years of preparing for the 2000 date change paid off for Washington state government, as agencies met Gov. Gary Locke's top goals for the rollover: no disruption of vital services and continuing accountability for public resources.

During the New Year's weekend, Department of Information Services Director Steve Kolodney monitored key state systems with technicians who regularly work around the clock in the DIS data center to support over 170 systems of DIS customers.

"It's great when a plan comes together," said Kolodney. "Around the world computers rolled into the new century with nary a problem because talented people recognized and fixed the problem."

The principles that led to state government's Year 2000 success—strong interagency collaboration, for example—also apply to the state's move toward digital government, said Barry Rau of Sterling Associates. His firm led the independent Y2K risk assessment of state government's mission-critical systems.

DIS opened state government's first Y2K office in 1995. Agencies began clearing their biggest mission-critical computing hurdles in mid-1998, when the Department of Social and Health Services' social service payment system became Y2K-compliant.

The Department of Employment Security demonstrated the Y2K compliance of its unemployment insurance system in January 1999, and the state's financial and accounting systems made the transition to Fiscal Year 2000 on July 1, 1999 with no problems.

DIS communications staff worked with the Washington State Year 2000 Coordination Center to produce around-the-clock news updates from Dec. 30 through Jan. 4 on Access Washington, the state's year 2000 information source on the Internet.

YEAR 2000 READINESS DISCLOSURE

Washington highly ranked in first stage of Digital State survey

The state of Washington, two-time and only winner of the Digital State title, is off to a solid start in the 2000 Digital State survey.

The state achieved its best-ever rankings—third and second respectively—in the first two survey categories reported: electronic commerce and business regulation, and electronic taxation.

"The people have said they want more efficient, effective government," said Gov. Gary Locke. "One of our key efficiency measures involves expanding online government services, like electronic tax filing, to provide easier citizen and business access."

The 50-state survey evaluates governments' use of information technology to serve citizens. Sponsors are the Center for Digital Government, Government Technology magazine and the Progress and Freedom Foundation.

Surveys for the remaining six categories will be completed and scores compiled over the next several months. The 2000 Digital State title goes to the state with the best overall score.

Board backs libraries' connection to K-20 Network

The K-20 Network Board has approved a plan to connect Washington's 68 public library districts to the K-20 Educational Telecommunications Network.

Linking libraries to K-20 represents the third phase of the award-winning network, established by legislators in 1996. The first two phases connected 412 school districts, college and university campuses with digital tools such as Internet access and group videoconferencing services.

Gov. Gary Locke's \$2.05 million supplemental budget package for expanding telecommunication infrastructure in rural areas of Washington includes library connections to the K-20 Network.

Internet access for all

"With this modest investment, all Washingtonians will have Internet access through their public library," said Locke. "This will provide residents throughout the state better access to their government, to essential public services, and to educational institutions and opportunities."

Connecting the libraries will add significant value to the K-20 Network, according to Nancy Zussy, Washington state librarian. "Public libraries have been natural community partners with schools for years. We all understand that lifelong learning occurs inside classrooms, but it also occurs through informal learning and continuing education every day in our public libraries," she said.

The 68 public library districts represent some 370 library buildings. More than half have 15 or fewer computers to connect, but several library districts have very large systems—such as the King County and Seattle library districts, with 700 to 800 computers. Zussy said the K-20 connections will be data-only, to address the libraries' most pressing need, with the option of adding video service later.

"It was always the intention of the legislation that created K-20 to connect libraries after the higher education and K-12 connections were completed," said Steve Kolodney, director of the Department of Information Services and chair of the network board. "This is our opportunity to step off into phase three, which was never funded although anticipated by the Legislature."

The K-20 Network's second-phase connections went mostly to K-12 school districts, and all but a handful were completed by mid-1999. The December connection of the rural Keller School District in northeast Washington officially completed phase two.

DIS and the K-20 Board proposed a budget to add the state's library districts to the K-20 Network with high speed connections. A separate budget proposal by the state library would add headquarters-to-branch library connections, as well as access to commercial databases.

Tribal college seeks K-20 hookup

Northwest Indian College is interested in a video connection to the state's K-20 Educational Telecommunications Network to share resources such as its tribal natural resources management program. Located on the Lummi tribal reservation near Bellingham, NWIC is headquarters of a network of 30 tribal colleges that uses a satellite-based delivery system for video instruction. It also has satellite downlinks to seven tribal communities in Washington. NWIC wants to integrate its satellite system with the K-20 Network's switched video capabilities to increase two-way collaboration with neighboring Western Washington University, the University of Washington and Washington State University.

